



BUILDING A WRITING COMMUNITY



Ideas from Youth Writing Camp 2013, Miami University

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With the new Common Core Standards, it is critical that our students become writers who express their thoughts and ideas clearly. In order for them to be able to do this, we need to create a classroom writing climate that encourages students to write, and write often. Here are some ways that you can build a writing community in your classroom.

Community Activities

- Community is...
 - writers respond to the above prompt and write ONE line. Lines are put together to make a community class poem
- Post It Expectations
 - writers walk around room and respond to questions on post its-
What do you hope to learn?, What can I do to help you?, What should our writing workshop look like?, What should our fellow writers be doing?, What will you need to do to be successful this year?
- Heart Maps (google search for MANY examples)
 - writers write down the things that have a special place in their hearts, in hearts!
 - the heart is then colored based on territories- favorites/hobbies, people, places, events
- Pseudonyms
 - writers come up with a pseudonym for writings that are submitted for teacher to share
- Collaborative Writings
 - writers each contribute words, lines to make wordles- wordle.net
 - Top Chef Writings - writers in teams create a story based on a random character, setting, plot they are designated to use
- *The Dot* - International Dot Day is September 15th
 - book by Peter Reynolds, YouTube animated video <http://goo.gl/BVN80T>
 - writers connect scribbled lines on a piece of paper and write likes above the line, dislikes below. Then connect papers to make a HUGE class line- that all started with a DOT!

Writing Ideas- Make Your Mark!

- a look at how we've become who we are, who we are, and who we want to be

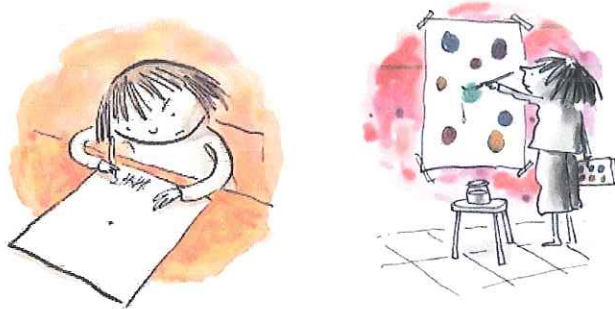
- Snapshot Memoirs
 - *Knuckleheads* by Jon Scieszka- Mentor text
 - write stories based on childhood photographs, or those inspired by photographs
- "Where I'm From" and Bio Poems
 - "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon- Mentor Text
 - both poems follow template, great way to learn about each other
- Walk With Me
 - use shoes as writing prompts
 - writers imagine walking in someone else's shoes
 - writers describe what it is like to walk in their own shoes
- "With My Own Two Hands"
 - song by Ben Harper
 - writers listen to song and answer prompt(s) such as - How can I use my hands to make a difference? What does this song mean to me?
- "I used to think..., but now I know...."
 - writers reflect on how their thinking has changed based on how their experiences have changed them.
 - can turn into a poem, narrative, memoir- ANYTHING!

SHARING

- Readbacks
 - writers listen all week to other writings and write down lines that stand out to them
 - go around circle and share these lines
- Open Mic/Author's Chair
- Quick Shares: One Line Shares or Elbow Buddy sharing
- Youblisher.com
 - upload pdf files and create FREE ebooks
 - <http://writeonspringmyer.weebly.com/2012-2013-write-on-anthology-book.html>
- Graffiti Wall
 - back writings with larger paper and everyone writes positive comments on the border

The Dot

Don't be afraid to make your mark! You never know where it will take you.



Your teachers have started a creative piece of writing, and it all started with a mark on their paper, the dot. Let's take that dot on a walk and see where it leads us.

1. Using a pencil, match the edge of your paper, with the person before you and continue their line onto your paper. As you continue the line it becomes your own. Think about the walk your dot would take. Would it be a curvy line, an energetic one that Zig-Zags across your paper? A line that has some highs and lows? What does your line say about who you are? This is your chance to make your mark!
Be sure to # the back of your paper. For example, if the person before you was #2, you will place a #3 on the back of your piece.
2. Using a black marker, trace over your pencil line. Make it nice and bold so your viewer can see it from a distance.
3. Now, think about events in your life that have "marked" you. Along the top of the line, write down things you love, or events that have made you happy. Along the bottom of the line, write down things you dislike, or that have been difficult in your life. Your words should curve and flow with the shape of the line. Write from the heart! This will inspire you in the days to come. Trace over your words with a marker so they stand out.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Snapshot Writing

A Glance at Memoirs and Vignettes



memoir	an autobiography of one's memory of events or people
vignette	a short "scene" that focuses on one moment to give an impression about a character, idea, setting, or object. It is usually combined with others. These are also called "slice of life" stories.

These types of stories can be hidden in anything. They could be in small trinkets, old toys, clothing, souvenirs, and especially photographs. Let's look at two examples from *Knuckleheads* by Jon Scieszka. This is a collection of vignettes/memoirs that are inspired from photographs, small found objects, and even a candy wrapper!



Look at your pictures and see what stories are hiding in them! Sometimes, there is another story that the photo will tell besides the obvious one that is in front of you!

Brainstorm #1: Word Association

Write ONE word that comes to mind when looking at the picture: _____
Write about that word. Think about why you picked the word. Think about your feelings. Think about your senses.

Brainstorm #2: Memory Chain

Write the ONE more word that comes to mind when looking at the picture: _____
For 3 minutes, we will create a chain. Don't think too much! Just write the next word that comes to mind. See where it takes you!

Brainstorm #3: What is the picture about?

This is the obvious story in the photograph, but now that you've explored the photo more, you should be able to go deeper and remember so many more details about the story.

Name: _____ Date: _____

“Where I’m From” Poem Brainstorm



Directions: Fill in the following chart with as many ideas as you can. We will use this brainstorming chart to complete our first writing of the year! Try to put at least 3 items in each box. The more ideas you have, the more you’ll have to choose from

What are some sounds and sayings that remind you of your family and past?	What are some smells and tastes that remind you of your family and past?	What are some important places for you?	Who are some of the important people in your life?
What are some memorable events in your life (both good and bad)?	What are some important firsts or successes for you?	What are some family traditions ? Where did your family come from?	What are some of your favorite things (you can list brand names here too)?

Walk With Me

To compose your piece, answer the prompts below. You do not have to answer every prompt. Allow yourself the opportunity to be creative! Be descriptive, go beyond the minimum. Your responses do not have to rhyme. Provide your audience with a glimpse into your life and who you really are. Your responses may be serious, funny, sad, or insightful. What's it like to walk a mile in your shoes? Remember, each step you take leaves a mark...

Walk with me and you will see . . .

Walk with me and you will hear . . .

Walk with me and you will smell . . .

Walk with me and you will feel . . .

Walk with me and you will learn . . .

Walk with me and you will discover . . .

With My Own Two Hands: Writing Prompts

Are you feeling inspired after listening to My Own Two Hands? Listed below are several different writing prompts to inspire some original words from you! Feel free to respond to any of the prompts below. Or, go your own route! The creative possibilities are endless . . .

What does this song mean to me?

How can I make my mark on the world? How can I use my "hands" to make a difference?

What images or memories come to mind as you are listening to this song? Do any of them inspire a story, a feeling, or a desire to make a difference?

This song could be a super hero's anthem! What would your super hero anthem be? How would you help the world?

Hint: Think about your favorite superhero! What characteristics does he or she have? If you were a super hero, what characteristics would you have? How would you "help the human race?" Would you use your own two hands or another super power?



Who Are You?

Life is journey of learning lessons, changing your mind, and becoming a new, improved version of yourself. In an ***“I used to...” poem*** you will have a chance to reflect on how you have grown throughout your life so far. Think of times that you have learned an important life lesson, understood something about yourself, or recognized a new perspective. How have your life experiences ***“MARKED”*** who you are today?

How To:	Mentor Text Examples:
<p>This poem is arranged in 2-line stanzas.</p> <p>You lines may begin with:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I used to think....., but now I know....</p> <p>OR</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I used to be....., but now I am....</p> <p>OR</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Create your own line starters to reflect your journey!</p>	<p>I used to think that lightning bugs were magic, but now I know that nature just has a magical way of helping creatures adapt to their environment.</p> <p>I used to think that adults always did the right thing, but now I know that they sometimes make mistakes and can still let you down.</p> <p>I used to be a superhero with just a sheet for a cape, but now I know that soldiers are the real superheroes.</p> <p>I used to be afraid of the dark, but now I know scary things can happen in the daylight too.</p> <p>I used to be the little brother—always getting picked on, but now I know that my brother and sister really do love me.</p>